

# How We Arrived<sup>[1]</sup>

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*This article was a report to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet made by Lenin the day after his arrival in Petrograd on April 4 (17), 1917, on behalf of the emigrants who returned from Switzerland together with him.*

The news that the British and French governments have refused to grant the emigrant internationalists passage to Russia has already made its way into the socialist press.

The thirty-two political emigrants of various party affiliations (among them 19 Bolsheviks, 6 [Bundists](#)<sup>[2]</sup> 3 adherents of the Paris internationalist paper [Nashe Slovo](#)<sup>[3]</sup>) who have arrived here consider it their duty to make known the following:

We are in possession of a number of documents which we shall publish as soon as we receive them from Stockholm (we left them behind because the Swedish-Russian border is under the full control of agents of the British Government), and which will give everyone a clear picture of the deplorable role the above-named "Allied" governments are playing in this connection. On this point we shall add only the following: The Zurich Emigrants' Repatriation Committee, which consists of representatives of twenty-three groups (including the Central Committee, the Organising Committee, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Bund), unanimously passed a resolution stating publicly that the British Government decided to prevent the emigrant internationalists from returning to their native land and taking part in the struggle against the imperialist war.

From the first days of the revolution this intention on the part of the British Government had become quite clear to the emigrants. At a conference of representatives of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (M.A. Natalison), the Organising Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (L. Martov), and the Bund (Kosovsky), a plan was conceived (it was proposed by L. Martov) to obtain for these emigrants passage through Germany in exchange for German and Austrian prisoners interned in Russia.

A number of telegrams to this effect were sent to Russia, while steps were taken through the Swiss socialists to get this plan put through.

The telegrams sent to Russia were held up, apparently by our Provisional "Revolutionary Government" (or its supporters).

After waiting two weeks for an answer from Russia, we decided to carry out the above-mentioned plan by ourselves (other emigrants decided to wait a little longer, being still unconvinced that the Provisional Government would do nothing to ensure the passage of all emigrants).

The whole business was handled by Fritz Platten, a Swiss internationalist socialist. He concluded a Carefully worded agreement with the German Ambassador in Switzerland. The text of this agreement will be published later. Its main points are: (1) All emigrants, regardless of their opinions on the war, shall be allowed passage. (2) The railway coach in which the emigrants will travel shall have the privileges of extraterritoriality; no one shall have the right to enter the coach without Platten's permission; there shall be no control either of passports or luggage. (3) The travellers agree to agitate in Russia that the emigrants who have been granted passage be exchanged for a corresponding number of Austro-German internees.

All attempts on the part of the German Social-Democratic majority to communicate with the travellers were firmly repelled by the latter. The coach was accompanied by Platten all the way. He had decided to travel with us to Petrograd but he has been detained at the Russian border (Tornio)—let us hope, only temporarily. All negotiations were conducted with the participation of and in complete accord with a number of foreign internationalist socialists. The protocol of the journey was signed by two French socialists, Lorient and Guilbeaux, and by a socialist from the Liebknecht group (Hartstein), by the Swiss socialist Platten, the Polish Social-Democrat Broziski, the Swedish Social-Democrat deputies Lindhagen, Carleson, Ström, Ture Nerman and others.

“Were Karl Liebknecht in Russia now, the Milyukovs would readily let him out to go to Germany; the Bethmann-Holweges let you Russian internationalists out to go to Russia. Your business is to go to Russia and fight there against both German and Russian imperialism.” That is what these internationalist comrades told us. We think they were right. We shall make a report of our journey to the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. We hope that the latter will obtain the release of a corresponding number of internees, first and foremost the prominent Austrian socialist, Otto Bauer, and that it will obtain a permit for all emigrants, not only the social-patriots, to return to Russia. We hope that the Executive Committee will put an end also to the unheard-of state of affairs, where no newspapers left of [Rech](#)<sup>[4]</sup> are allowed to be sent out of the country, and even the Manifesto of the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies<sup>[5]</sup> to the workers of the world is not allowed to get into the foreign press.

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## Notes

[1] [PLACEHOLDER.]

[2] [PLACEHOLDER.]

[3] [PLACEHOLDER.]

[4] [PLACEHOLDER.]

[5] Lenin refers to the appeal of the Petrograd Soviet “To the Peoples of the World”, adopted at its meeting on March 14 (21), 1917, and published the next day in the central newspapers. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders were obliged to issue this appeal under pressure from the revolutionary masses, who demanded an end to the war.

The appeal called upon the working people of the belligerent countries to come out in favour of peace. It did not, however, expose the predatory nature of the war, did not propose any practical steps in the fight for peace, and in effect, justified the continuation of the imperialist war by the bourgeois Provisional Government.

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